Dear Sirs/Madams:

I am a software developer that uses a variety of operating systems and machine platforms. I am aware of the recent settlement attempts involving Microsoft and wish to add my two cents worth. Microsoft has made some very nice applications software. As a developer there is a problem with developing software for Microsoft and that is the difficulty obtaining information about the underlying system. Microsoft claims that by publishing their application programming interfaces (API's) they are in effect an open standards operating system. The problem is that when internal software incompatibilities exist, it is next to impossible to determine whether the problem is one you have caused or one that is ocurring because of incomplete information about the underlying system. This gives an unfair advantage to Microsoft developers that have access to the internal details of the underlying operating system.

I respect Microsofts attempts to earn an honest profit upon their hard earned dollars. The problem is that with many undocumented features, developers outside the Microsoft corporate umbrella are at a big disadvantage developing software for their platforms. Apparently this is an attempt to effectively corner the market in software development. An example of this is Microsofts owner Bill Gates statements that "he wants hardware developers to get out of the business of writing hardware drivers." If this desire is implemented, most hardware applications for Unix like systems such as Linux will be incapable of communication through the hardware to the OS. The reason I believe this to be the case is that most corporations enter financial agreements when they develop software for another vendor. As such, Microsoft will have the hardware specifications for all new peripheral devices and their proprietary nature will make it a process of reverse engineering the devices to make them compatible with Free BSD, Linux and other P.C. based Unices.

I believe a fair settlement that would sponsor competition in the market would be to either remove the advantage Microsoft desktop developers have by requiring the corporation to split. I have no problem with Bill Gates continuing to own it all, I just resent the advantage Microsoft developers have in information access. The other most palatable solution to all parties would be to require Microsoft to develop its desktop application for other operating systems than just windows and the macintosh operating system. This would increase the competition in operating systems dramatically, improve communications capability between corporations using different operating systems and make Unix like systems an attractive alternative to the Windows platform.

Sincerely,

John M. Resler

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Carpe Diem
    And While You're At It...
        Illegitimos Non-Carborundum